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DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE:

THE EFFECT OF SUBTLE RACISM ON BLACK EMPLOYEE PROMOTIONS

by

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B.B.A., Baylor University, 1992

B.A., Oklahoma State University, 1997

A thesis submitted to the

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Discrimination in the Workplace: The Effect of Subtle Racism on Black Employee Promotions

Thesis directed by Assistant Professor Donna Chrobot-Mason

ABSTRACT

Subtle racism toward Black employees continues to be a problem in the workplace today. Locus of control was investigated as a possible predictor of subtle racism. In addition, the effect of subtle racist views on employee promotion decisions was examined. Two hundred forty-nine undergraduate and graduate students reviewed a job description and evaluated seven candidates' resumes. Their tasks included choosing the three best candidates for the job and rating each candidate's qualifications. Results revealed a significant relationship between locus of control and subtle racism. This finding suggests that individuals with an external locus of control are more likely to possess intolerant views toward Blacks. In addition, subtle racist attitudes were strongly associated with the promotion of fewer Blacks and rating Black employees less qualified for a job. Limitations, future research, and implications for organizational promotion policies are discussed.

This abstract accurately represents the content of the candidate's thesis. I recommend

its publication.

Signed ___Donna Chrobot-Mason___
Donna Chrobot-Mason

This thesis for the Master of Arts

degree by

Brett J. Gooden

has been approved

by

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4/1/02
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family. I am especially grateful to three people: my father, for his confidence in me; my mother, for the example she set for me; and my wife, for the endless support and encouragement she gave me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

TABLES

Table

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the passage of the civil rights legislation during the 1960s, America has made steady progress to assure equal opportunities for ethnic minorities and, as a result, overt demonstrations of racial prejudice have declined considerably (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Prior to these laws being enacted, it was commonplace for Whites to restrict the freedom of Blacks, demand their respect, and limit residential, educational, and employment opportunities for Blacks (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998).

During the past half-century, however, successive generations have witnessed the progress toward ensuring all people are treated fairly and racial prejudice and discrimination are eradicated. The attempt to achieve racial equality not only tears down barriers between Blacks and Whites but also fulfills the standard that "all men are created equal," a concept guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The sense of satisfaction that accompanies reversing the bigotry of the past, nevertheless, must be tempered by an understanding that while blatant racist behaviors are far less frequent than before, negative attitudes toward Blacks are ever-present today among the majority of White Americans (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991).

Racism, also referred to as old-fashioned racism, may be defined in terms of the individual, institution, or culture. Individual racism refers to prejudiced or biased

beliefs about a person with an emphasis placed on his or her biological features and includes acting toward that person in a discriminatory manner based on those beliefs (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Institutional racism deals with policies that intentionally or unintentionally limit opportunities of certain groups of people. Cultural racism considers the superiority of one race's heritage over another.

According to Dovidio and Gaertner (1991), nearly 20% of White Americans are old-fashioned racists. They advocate the segregation of Blacks and Whites, including "separate but equal" facilities for each group, and support policies that limit the power and potential of Black men and women. One recent study found a link between racism and aggressive behavior, in which highly prejudiced subjects delivered more intense shocks to both Black and White competitors during an experiment than lower prejudiced participants (Beal, O'Neal, Ong, & Ruscher, 2000). This suggests that some Americans not only still hold negative attitudes but also display negative behaviors toward Blacks. The emotional aspect of negative racial attitudes usually forms early in life, is most often shaped without any direct contact with Blacks, and is resistant to change by future experiences (McConahay, 1986). This lasting negative effect often influences one's cognitions and behaviors later in life, for instance, when that person is required to interact with Blacks on a regular basis.

Old-fashioned racism has been studied extensively since at least the 1950s. While researchers have found a significant decline in the number of people who hold

such overtly prejudiced beliefs, it also has become clear that a subtle form of racism has taken its place as the most common form of racial intolerance (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991). Although the majority of Whites denounce overt intolerance toward Blacks, Dovidio and Gaertner (1991) suggested that a large number of them demonstrate acceptance of Blacks only on surveys and polls and, instead, secretly embrace prejudicial attitudes.

This shift from overt to covert racism can be explained by the occurrence of two significant historical events (McConahay, 1986). First, the deliberate actions of Adolf Hitler during World War II toward Jews gave the concept of racism a bad name. His behaviors and reputation helped greatly reduce open expressions of racism. Second, the civil rights movement of the 1960s successfully dealt with overt racism through the legislation passed and prompted positive changes in society's attitudes toward racial equality.

This subtle form of racism is the focus of my study. Several factors—color blindness, intergroup contact, White racial identity status, and Protestant ethic—have been shown to predict subtle racist behaviors, and this study will attempt to determine if locus of control is another. Specifically, I will first explore personal locus of control based on Heaven and Furnham's (1987) study, which linked economic locus of control to racial prejudice. This information may assist employers in assembling racially diverse workgroups as well as help them pre-screen applicants for positions that require interracial contact.

This study will also ascertain whether a person's subtle racist views are correlated with the promotion of fewer Black employees. Moreover, I will investigate whether discrimination against Blacks is more prevalent in promotion versus selection decisions. Although many studies have examined the influence of subtle racist attitudes in the workplace, nearly all have involved experiments using hiring decisions (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Brief, Buttram, Elliott, Reizenstein, & McCline, 1995). However, very little research has investigated the effect of subtle racist attitudes on promotions of Black employees. Furthermore, because employee promotion is the stage of employment in which discrimination against racial minorities is most prevalent (Baldi & McBrier, 1997), this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by determining whether subtle racists are more likely to discriminate against Blacks when making promotion decisions compared to selection decisions.

Finally, this study intends to determine if subtle racists who are held accountable for their promotion decisions discriminate less against Blacks than those who make such decisions free from scrutiny. Discrimination in promotion occurs because promotion decisions are made subjectively (Baldi & McBrier, 1997), and those decisions are often not subject to review by a supervisor or panel. However, because outcomes are altered when an individual's behaviors are observed by another person (Powell & Butterfield, 1997), making an individual accountable for promotion decisions may result in less frequent acts of discrimination toward Black employees.

The results of this study may reveal the degree to which an employee's race affects their opportunity for promotion and may encourage organizations to implement measures to remove the racial glass ceiling by making promotions a more equitable process.

The Contemporary Expression of Prejudice: Subtle Racism

The concept of subtle racism is reflected in a number of theoretical models, including symbolic racism, modern racism, and aversive racism. Although their characteristics are slightly different, the primary theme remains nearly identical for all three models: present-day racists are those who unintentionally harbor negative views toward Blacks, views that are often manifested in the form of discrimination (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). A brief explanation of each is presented below, however, for purposes of this paper the term *subtle racism* will subsequently be used to refer to Whites' covert expression of racial prejudice toward Blacks.

Symbolic racism has been called the "behavioral bedrock under a recent superficial deposit of tolerance" (McClelland & Hunter, 1992). Sears (1988) stated that symbolic racism falls into three categories: (a) antagonism toward Blacks' "pushing too hard" and moving too fast, especially through their use of violence to advance their agenda; (b) resentment toward special favors for Blacks; and (c) denial of continuing discrimination, which is a belief that discrimination in such areas as

jobs or housing is an issue of the past because Blacks now have the freedom to compete in the marketplace and to enjoy things they can afford.

Modern racism theory espouses the same tenets as symbolic racism. Specifically, advocates of modern racism suggest that Blacks' recent gains are undeserved, and the support that society has provided Blacks is likewise unwarranted (McConahay, 1986). Because their views toward Blacks are subtle, and in their minds justifiable arguments, modern racists do not believe they are racially prejudiced. They define racism as those behaviors normally associated with old-fashioned racism—negative beliefs about Blacks' intelligence, ambition, honesty, and similar stereotypes, as well as support for segregation and acts of open discrimination. Modern racists are therefore ardently opposed to racism, albeit according to their narrow definition of the word.

Compared to the symbolic and modern racism frameworks, the principles of aversive racism are defined by the behaviors of subtle racism rather than the reasons behind the prejudicial beliefs. Aversive racism involves the following ideas: (a) the bias of aversive racists is expressed in more subtle ways than that of old-fashioned racists; (b) despite their conscious rejection by aversive racists, unconscious negative feelings linger; (c) aversive racists express more bias toward higher-status than toward lower-status minorities; and (d) aversive racists oppose programs designed to improve the status of Blacks, but seemingly on the basis of factors other than race (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998).

Unlike old-fashioned racists, aversive racists sympathize with the victims of past injustice, support pro-Black public policies in terms of promoting equality, and regard themselves as nonprejudiced; however, they do possess negative feelings about Blacks (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). For example, individuals with subtle racist views tend to have positive attitudes about Blacks in terms of abstract concepts such as equality and fairness, but they also remain less enthusiastic about personally having Blacks as neighbors and are opposed to interracial marriage (Wolfe & Spencer, 1996). This dichotomy of beliefs about Blacks is evident through survey data (Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Drout, 1994). In one survey, 76% of Whites responded, "affirmative action programs that help Blacks and other minorities to get ahead should be supported." However, in another survey 80% of Whites opposed giving "preferential treatment" to a Black worker over a White worker. Katz, Hass, and Wackenhut (1986) stated, "Whites have learned to pay lip service to a norm of equality, but remain fundamentally racist in their feelings."

While old-fashioned racists promote rules and laws that limit the rights and opportunities for minorities, aversive racists merely favor the status quo (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). However, in some instances aversive racists advocate restrictions on minorities when they are justifiable—lacking proper credentials, for example. In both cases, their prejudice toward Blacks is vented but in a disguised manner.

Because aversive racists outwardly reject negative stereotypes and claim to have sympathetic feelings toward victims of injustice, they are convinced that their

racial attitudes are largely positive and certainly not prejudiced (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Moreover, aversive racists behave according to the way they promote themselves—as advocates of racial equality—but only when the situation is socially appropriate to do so. However, their intolerant views toward Blacks surface in settings in which their prejudice can be rationalized. For example, Frey and Gaertner (1986) studied subtle racist behaviors among White college students and the degree of assistance they provided Blacks compared to Whites. The study was designed with the student playing the role of the director and two confederates serving as a supervisor and worker. Participants offered less help to a Black worker when the worker asked for assistance rather than when the supervisor requested help for the worker. Furthermore, subjects rationalized giving less help if they believed the Black worker was capable of completing the task without aid, and the difficulty in completing the task was not due to circumstances beyond his control.

Individual Factors that Predict Subtle Racist Beliefs

As early as the mid 1930s, researchers sought to explain the causes behind racial prejudice. At that time, experts asserted that prejudice was a form of pathology that could be the result of scapegoating. A more recent theory argued that an individual subjected to a severe childhood upbringing could produce a rigid adult who is prejudiced against any person different from themselves (Wolfe & Spencer, 1996).

Beginning in 1945, the open discrimination against Blacks that was legally permitted by most states was a trend that was being reversed. Less than 10 years later those laws were being eliminated, as protections for the rights of Blacks were gradually being established (McConahay, 1986). By 1954, Allport characterized prejudice and discrimination not as pathological conditions but as negative attitudes and negative behaviors toward individuals or groups of people.

Since that time, as overt expressions of racism have decreased and more covert forms have emerged, researchers have conducted numerous studies to determine those factors that predict subtle racist beliefs. Consequently, many variables have been identified as possible antecedents of racial prejudice, but the findings are often contradicted by other studies. For example, some have found that personal self-esteem is a predictor of prejudice (Crocker & Schwartz, 1985; Verkuyten & Masson, 1995), while others have obtained conflicting results and concluded that self-esteem is uncorrelated with subtle racist beliefs (e.g. De Cremer & Oosterwegel, 1999).

Several factors, however, have robust support among researchers as being significant predictors of subtle racist beliefs: color blindness, intergroup contact, and Protestant ethic. Color blindness refers to treating people according to their individual merit and character and ignoring race as a trait that distinguishes one person from another (Jones, 1997). The problem with this is that it is not possible to ignore visible differences. The current literature supports the link between color

blindness and subtle racism. Schofield (1986) stated that the color-blind perspective creates an environment that enables subtle racists to act in a discriminatory manner. Carr (1997) found that color-blind attitudes are related to racial prejudice, with self-identified color blindness being connected to a greater endorsement of racism. Similarly, another study confirmed that high levels of color-blind attitudes are significantly associated with higher levels of racial prejudice (Neville, Lilly, Lee, Duran, & Browne, 2000).

Intergroup contact is based on Allport's contact hypothesis of racial and ethnic relations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000), which states that interracial contact will reduce prejudice under certain conditions. The hypothesis further holds that stereotypes about another race are based on ignorance (Wood & Sonleitner, 1996) and can be overcome through exposure to dissimilar others. Wood and Sonleitner discovered that past contact had a significant negative association with both anti-Black prejudice and stereotype adherence and interracial contact was even found to reduce stereotype adherence and prejudice.

The Protestant ethic is based on the Puritans' emphasis on the religious duty to work hard, constant self-examination, and self-discipline. The early influence of the Puritans led to a value system known as individualism (Katz, Hass, & Wackenhut, 1986), which stresses personal freedom, self-reliance, devotion to work, and achievement. The tendency to strongly advocate the individualistic orientation affects one's opinions and judgments about minority groups (Katz & Hass, 1988).

Those who strongly support the Protestant ethic are more likely to hold anti-Black views and, according to Allon (1982), perceive Blacks as lazy, "sinful," and lacking discipline and self-denial. Glover (1994) reported that significant predictors of subtle racist attitudes include higher levels of a Protestant ethic outlook. Another study concluded that Protestant ethic values were associated with increased prejudice toward Blacks (Biernat, Vescio, Theno, & Crandall, 1996).

The present study will investigate locus of control as another potential predictor of subtle racist beliefs. In particular, I will focus on locus of control because of its close association with economic locus of control, a factor that has been linked to racial prejudice (Heaven & Furnham, 1987).

Locus of Control

The extent to which people believe they can control events compared to the influence of environmental forces is a personality variable referred to as locus of control. This concept, which emerged from Rotter's (1954) social learning theory, has been closely linked to the Protestant ethic (Furnham, 1986). Rotter (1966) suggested that individuals possess either an internal or external locus of control. Those with an internal orientation (internals) think that their efforts are mostly responsible for outcomes, however those holding an external viewpoint (externals) believe that they have little control in affecting outcomes. Whereas internals see skill

playing the primary role in their circumstances, externals view chance as being the principal influence.

From the study of religious beliefs to patient health assessments, locus of control has been used in a wide variety of settings. Heaven and Furnham (1987) hypothesized that an individual's view toward economic issues was correlated with negative racial attitudes. Based on Rotter's (1966) past work, they used an Economic Locus of Control (ELOC) scale to measure whether people believe they are in control of their economic status (internal ELOC) or if they think that chance or powerful others such as the government or the rich control their economic position (external ELOC). Their research showed external ELOC to be a predictor of racial prejudice.

Researchers have studied the effect of locus of control on people's views of outgroup members. Employing the Adult Locus of Control Scale and the Pharisaic Virtue scale, Powell and Gable (1973) found a correlation between locus of control and individual attitudes toward others. As a result, they concluded "feelings of internal control are associated with less self-righteous or hypocritical attitudes toward others." Moreover, they suggested that externals' negative opinions of dissimilar others may be a defensive response to the contempt they hold toward being controlled by external influences.

In another study, Duckitt (1984) used items from Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale and a 10-item ethnocentrism scale to examine the relationship between external locus of control and racial prejudice, respectively, among White South

Africans and reported a small but significant relationship among English-speaking individuals.

These two studies identified the influence locus of control has on views of outgroup members. While the first (Powell & Gable, 1973) showed that internals have more favorable views of dissimilar others, it did not specifically measure subtle racist views held by Whites toward Blacks. Meanwhile, the second (Duckitt, 1984) demonstrated that externals are more racially prejudiced, but that study used a measure that was shown to be valid and reliable in South Africa. The current research may be augmented by investigating the relationship between locus of control among Whites who hold subtle racist views toward Blacks. This study would thus require using an accurate measure of subtle racism that assesses the issues of racial intolerance specific to America. Therefore, I predict:

> H1: External locus of control will be positively correlated with subtle racist attitudes.

The Impact of Subtle Racism in the Workplace

Whereas prejudice is an attitude, discrimination is a "selectively unjustified negative behavior toward members of the target group" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986). Although Whites attempt to be seen as non-racist by acting in a manner that disguises their negative opinions about Blacks, their intolerant beliefs ultimately lead to supporting discriminatory treatment (Swim et al., 1995). Not only are these

discriminatory behaviors extremely difficult to eliminate because they continue to exist despite changes in society and in organizations, but also because the perpetrators are often not aware of their beliefs and behaviors (Bielby, 1987).

Racial discrimination in employment was the focus of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This legislation focused on prohibiting acts of intentional discrimination and mandated a level playing field for all applicants and employees with regard to hiring, promotion, demotion, firing, layoffs, compensation, and work assignment. As a result, employers can be held liable for making employment decisions that result in adverse impact, the result of a substantially different standard applied to minorities that works to their disadvantage (Barrett, 1996).

Rarely do employers, however, announce an intent to discriminate against minorities. And without a "smoking gun," intentional discrimination is difficult to prove, because most people who knowingly want to discriminate will "cover their tracks" (Barrett, 1998). Still, while intentional discrimination in which the employer publicizes his intent is not prevalent, it does occur. Barrett (1998) cited the following example:

> One stockbrokerage firm told the woman at the employment agency not to send over any "Number twos," a code work for African-Americans. They judged correctly from her accent that she was White, but they could not tell that her husband was Black. She was happy to testify (p. 89).

The civil rights laws were effective in providing basic protection for minorities, but it was not until the Supreme Court's decision in *Griggs v. Duke Power*

Company that employee protection from unintentional discrimination was clarified

(Barrett, 1998). This case dealt with an employer who required that applicants

possess a high school diploma and achieve passing scores on two intelligence tests.

Griggs claimed that these requirements were unfair because they were not related to

the duties of the job. Player (1999) explained that although the lower court had ruled

that the plaintiff was required to prove the defendant's discriminatory motive, the

Supreme Court reversed, stating:

> The [Civil Rights] Act proscribes not only overt discrimination but also
> practices that are fair in form, but discriminatory in operation. Absence of
> discriminatory intent does not redeem employment procedures or testing
> mechanisms that operate as "built-in headwinds" for minority groups and are
> unrelated to measuring job capability. (p. 111)

Unintentional discrimination can be equally detrimental to minorities as

intentional discrimination, but it can often be difficult to detect. Laboratory

experiments have allowed researchers to identify subtle behaviors that lead to

discrimination, behaviors committed unknowingly by Whites; this notion is supported

by subtle racists' desire to maintain a non-racist self-image. One study revealed that

when interviewing Blacks, White participants display "low-immediacy" behaviors,

which include using less eye contact with the interviewee, less verbal interaction, and

less friendliness (Bielby, 1987).

Similarly, subtle racist behaviors are committed in the form of "attribution

errors," when Whites interpret positive behaviors of Blacks as the result of situational

factors and negative behaviors due to dispositional factors, including those actions

15

that mirror cultural stereotypes (Bielby, 1987). Wells (1998) explained that subtle racists' way of dealing with Black managers is to initially view them in a favorable light and treat them as the exception to the rule, meaning that unlike "typical" Blacks they are exempt from negative labels or group stereotypes because they hold a position of status and prestige. However, because they believe this job rightfully belongs to a White individual, subtle racists will carefully observe the Black manager's behavior and watch for any perceived disappointments, missteps, or errors. The subject of the unattainable expectations of these Whites, the once-idealized individual is now judged to be a failure and triggers reactions such as "I knew it was too good to be true, he is just like all the rest. This affirmative action business does not work" (Wells, 1998).

One source of the development of subtle racist beliefs deals with the passage of anti-discrimination laws. Prejudiced Whites consider this legislation the result of African Americans pushing for increased economic and political power, and this viewpoint often leads to unknowingly discriminating against Blacks (Swim et al., 1995).

Although subtle racists are often unaware of their discriminatory behaviors, Blacks perceive their conduct as inconsistent and insincere (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Bachman, 2001). Distrust of Whites results, and Blacks become less responsive to feedback they receive from Whites; specifically, they disregard negative feedback as being a response to racial prejudice and see positive feedback as overcompensation in

an attempt to come across as non-racist (Major & Crocker, 1993). Because they desire to appear nonprejudiced, subtle racists avoid offering too much positive or too much negative feedback toward Blacks, since either extreme would connote being racially prejudiced.

While racial discrimination exists across organizations and includes both white-collar and blue-collar jobs, the disparity in treatment of Blacks compared to Whites increases dramatically in upper-level positions. According to the 2000 Census, Blacks constitute 12.3% of the general U.S. population (United States Census Bureau, n.d.). However, while Blacks overall represent 13% of the Navy, they comprise only 5% of the officers and less than 2% of the admirals (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1998). Dovidio and Gaertner (1998) reported that this same trend is evident in the private sector, as less than 1% of the executives in Fortune 1000 industrial and Fortune 500 service companies are Black. Such differences in treatment and opportunities between Blacks and Whites are evident throughout all stages of employment, but especially promotion.

The Effects of Subtle Racism on Employee Promotions

Promotions are beneficial to companies because they are useful in filling vacant positions from within the organization, and they also reward employees by providing them with direct economic and psychological reinforcement (Sheridan,

17

Slocum, & Buda, 1997). In addition to the increase in pay, promotions usually afford employees with greater autonomy (Baldi & McBrier, 1997).

While much research has been directed toward the advancement of women in organizations, less attention has been paid to the upward movement of racial minorities into managerial positions (Powell & Butterfield, 1997). Although employee promotions should be based primarily on an individual's job performance, Markham, Harlan, and Hackett (1987) found that factors other than work-related accomplishments, the employee's educational achievements, on-the-job training, and demographic characteristics also influence upward mobility. Blacks may experience slower promotion rates than Whites, which results in "glass ceilings" that are set as an obstruction to advancement (Sheridan et al., 1997). These glass ceilings are established so that the proportion of ethnic minorities declines with higher occupational status.

A majority of the existing literature supports the idea that an employee's race is a key factor in promotions and the quality of treatment that person receives, with Whites receiving more favorable treatment than Blacks (James, 2000). Further, because White men make most of the decisions about promotion into upper management, Blacks may face difficulties overcoming negative stereotypes regarding their executive potential (Tomkiewicz, Brenner, & Adeyemi-Bello, 1998). Those Black employees who are promoted into the upper managerial ranks are not well received by middle-level White managers who possess subtle racist beliefs. They

covertly believe that "career advancement of Blacks toward the strategic apex of an organization represents a 'scandalous paradox'" (Wells, 1998). This paradox transpires when a Black individual is given a position historically granted exclusively to Whites.

A study conducted by Baldi and McBrier (1997) explored differences between Blacks and Whites and their promotion rates. In their sample, they identified individual-level factors such as education level, work experience within the firm, and pre-firm work experience. They also looked at company-level variables that included whether the worker's company had an internal labor market, a union, a personnel department, and on-the-job training. Their findings revealed that the differences in these variables influenced promotion rates of employees. However, these variables could not account for the disparity in promotion rates between Blacks and Whites. Accordingly, they concluded, "Black workers are significantly less likely to be promoted than are White workers with similar levels of education and work experience in firms with similar characteristics and organizational environments."

Although some research has indicated that an employee's race had no effect on rates of promotion (Sheridan et al., 1997) or selection (Brief, Dietz, Cohen, Pugh, & Vaslow, 2000), other studies have shown that race plays a significant part in such decisions. Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) reported that participants who scored higher on a measure of subtle racism recommended hiring Black applicants significantly less than those who scored lower on the measure. James (2000) found that Black

19

managers were promoted at a slower rate and received less psychosocial support than their White counterparts.

The research suggests that career advancement among Black employees is slower than the upward mobility of Whites in the workplace. This trend is compounded due to the fact that subtle racists are overall less likely to make employment decisions in favor of Blacks. Therefore, I predict that individuals with subtle racist attitudes will promote fewer Black employees. I also predict that high subtle racists are more likely than low subtle racists to discriminate against Black employees when rating their qualifications for promotion. Specifically, subtle racist attitudes will be associated with assigning lower overall ratings to Black employees being considered for promotion.

> H2: Subtle racist attitudes will be negatively correlated with Black employee promotion rates.
>
> H3: Subtle racist attitudes will be negatively correlated with the ratings of the qualifications of Black candidates for promotion.

Accountability. In most organizations, individuals who make promotion decisions are often monitored very little. While the hiring process is closely watched to prevent acts of either intentional or unintentional racial discrimination, promotion decisions are less open to scrutiny because the criteria are usually more subjective (Baldi & McBrier, 1997).

Outcomes are altered when an individual's behaviors are observed by another person (Powell & Butterfield, 1997). In particular, when promotions determined by a group of people are subject to scrutiny, behavior may be different from decisions made by a single individual who is not held accountable. Accordingly, Powell and Butterfield (1997) concluded that individuals may be less likely to discriminate on the basis of race when their decisions are examined, such as reviewed by a group of people.

Subtle racists discriminate only when their behavior is not easily recognizable, and consequently will not discriminate "in situations in which they recognize that discrimination would be obvious to others and themselves" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Therefore, it follows that subtle racists will be more likely to discriminate when making promotion decisions that are free from third-party examination or approval.

I predict that holding individuals accountable when making employment decisions will lead to significantly less discrimination toward Black employees. In particular, subtle racists will be less likely to make promotion decisions that discriminate against Blacks if they believe their decisions will be reviewed by a panel or another person. Moreover, this effect is consistent with the research that suggests subtle racists tend to not discriminate when others may interpret their behaviors as racially biased. Subtle racist attitudes and the accountability condition will interact to

influence the participant's promotion decisions, resulting in less discrimination toward Black employees.

> H4: Subtle racism will have a stronger negative relationship with promotion when participants are held accountable for their promotion decisions.

Racial Discrimination in Employee Selection Versus Promotion

The laws passed to prevent the occurrence of racial discrimination in employment have largely been successful in addressing overt behaviors, as employers can be held liable for making employment decisions that result in advantages for Whites or disadvantages for Blacks. However, given the emergence of covertly expressed prejudice, employment discrimination still occurs and is more difficult to detect than the more obvious types of bias against Blacks.

The effect of such subtle racist beliefs on selection decisions has been the focus of numerous studies (Brief et al., 1995; Brief et al., 2000; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). One study concluded that subtle racists were less likely to hire Black applicants when provided with a business justification to discriminate (Brief et al., 2000). This refers to a verbal or written form of guidance provided by a superior that instructs subordinates to discriminate against a particular group, an act justified by a business rationale. Subtle racists are also likely to discriminate in hiring situations when the Black candidate's qualifications are ambiguous (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Since appropriate behavior is not obvious—whether or not to hire the Black

candidate—the decision to discriminate does not appear as racially motivated, and subtle racists could justify their behavior according to unclear qualifications. However, when there is no business justification or the source of that justification is deemed an illegitimate source of authority, or when the Black applicant's qualifications are either clearly strong or clearly weak, the subtle racist is not likely to discriminate.

Fewer studies, however, have been conducted to test for the effect of subtle racist beliefs on promotion decisions. Baldi and McBrier (1997) stated that promotion is the stage of employment at which racial discrimination is most likely to persist. Moreover, whereas hiring decisions are based on past performance and measures that must be job-relevant, fair, and legally defensible, promotions entail subjective evaluations of employees. Therefore, in making promotion decisions employers are prone to discriminate in more subtle ways that are often difficult to detect, a fact that reduces the risk of litigation (Baldi & McBrier, 1997).

Subtle racists are more likely to demonstrate racial bias when their actions are not easily recognizable and are less likely to discriminate when decisions have an obvious right or wrong choice (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000). Therefore, since discrimination most frequently occurs during the promotion stage of employment, and because promotions are largely based on subjective criteria, I predict that:

H5: Subtle racist attitudes will be more negatively correlated with Black promotion rates than Black selection rates.

In the next chapter, I describe the methods used to examine my five hypotheses. These hypotheses were tested using a deceptive scenario in which participants were told that their opinions would influence the three of seven candidates for a job. In addition, they were told that the current research study involved looking at the effects of an economic recession on their opinions toward social issues. Participants completed a survey that assessed attitudes toward a wide array of topics such as homosexuality, politics, and race.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

Participants

Participants consisted of 249 students enrolled in psychology and business

courses during the 2002 spring semester at a university in the Rocky Mountain

region. This sample included 61 graduate students (32 males, 28 females, 1 no

response) and 188 undergraduate students (76 males, 105 females, 7 no response).

All participants took part in the study on a voluntary basis and were awarded extra

credit points by their instructors for their involvement. Because the study focuses

specifically on the responses of Whites, all individuals belonging to a racial category

other than White received the same amount of extra credit for participating, but their

responses were removed from data analysis. In order to isolate the White

participants, students were told to select a survey based on their self-identified racial

category, "White" or "Non-White." The surveys completed by minority individuals

contained the items pertaining to locus of control and the filler items but omitted

those items measuring subtle racism.

Measures

Locus of Control

Participants responded to items from a revised version of Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale. This scale uses 10 of the original scale's 23 items and measures two factors, personal and political control. Ferguson (1993) found the 10-item scale valid compared to Rotter's 23-item scale. Specifically, he correlated participants' feelings of being "worn out" and "uptight" with their responses on the locus of control scales. Ferguson reported that his personal control items and Rotter's scale had significant positive correlations with two self-report measures of health.

For purposes of this study, however, only the five items that measure personal control were used (see Appendix A). These five items shown in Appendix A were answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with low scores indicating an internal locus of control and high scores reflecting an external locus of control. Ferguson's (1993) abbreviated scale was selected because it measures only two factors, personal and political control. This permits isolating items, those in the personal control subscale, that assess the extent that participants feel they can control or influence issues and events pertaining to their lives. In contrast, research using Rotter's (1966) scale has produced between one and nine factors (Coombs & Schroeder, 1988; McInish & Lee, 1987).

<u>Subtle Racism</u>

Items from the Modern Racism Scale (MRS) (McConahay, 1986) were employed to assess participants' levels of covert prejudice. The MRS was selected because of its common use in other recent research studies (Brief et al., 2000; Beal et al., 2000). In addition, the scale serves as an effective measure of subtle racism because of its nonreactivity; that is, items are phrased such that participants are unlikely to recognize them as measuring racial prejudice (McConahay, 1986).

The MRS consists of 7 items, and participant responses fall on a 5-point Likert scale and range from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with high scores indicating a higher level of modern racism. One of the items was not included in this study. That item—"Blacks have more influence upon school desegregation plans than they ought to have"—also loaded high on a factor of old-fashioned racism (McConahay, 1986). Therefore, the six-item scale (see Appendix B), which collectively has an alpha coefficient of 0.77 (McConahay, 1986), was used to assess subtle racist attitudes.

<u>Filler Items</u>

In addition to the 11 survey items measuring locus of control and subtle racism, participants responded to 15 additional items (see Appendix C) dealing with such social issues as welfare, poverty, homosexuality, abortion, and political affiliation. Developed by the principal researcher, these items were added solely to

27

prevent participants from identifying the items that addressed locus of control and racial prejudice. Responses to these items will not be analyzed. The items were collectively presented to participants as a "Social Attitudes Survey."

Procedure

Overview

This study can be divided into two areas of emphasis: (a) to determine if locus of control was an accurate predictor of subtle racist attitudes; and (b) the effect of subtle racist attitudes on employment decisions. Each area is presented in more detail below.

While research has shown several variables—for example, color blindness, intergroup contact, White racial identity status, Protestant ethic—as significant predictors of subtle racism, this study sought to examine locus of control as another potential predictor. It is hypothesized that external locus of control would be positively correlated with subtle racist attitudes.

The Modern Racism Scale was employed to measure subtle racism. In order to assess the effect of subtle racist attitudes on employment decisions, participants' scores on this scale were compared to the number of Blacks they hired or promoted for a position. The lack of legal scrutiny and subjective nature of promotion decisions served as the basis of three hypotheses: (a) subtle racist attitudes will be negatively correlated with Black employee promotion rates; (b) subtle racist attitudes

will be negatively correlated with the ratings of the qualifications of Black candidates for promotion; and (c) high subtle racist attitudes will result in greater discrimination against Blacks in promotion decisions than selection decisions.

Finally, since most promotions are made by one person and usually are not subject to review, the concept of accountability was tested. This author contends that when they are not held accountable for their decisions, Whites with high subtle racist attitudes are less likely to promote Blacks than Whites with low subtle racist attitudes. Thus, the interaction between subtle racism and the accountability condition will lead to lower discrimination against Black employees.

Independent and Dependent Variables

The study included two independent variables, type of employment decision and the accountability condition. Participants were randomly assigned to the selection or promotion group and were instructed to read a job description and review seven individual resumes. Participants were then responsible for either selecting or promoting the three most qualified candidates.

The accountability condition was an independent variable applied only to members in the promotion group. Promotion group participants were randomly assigned to the accountability condition by being told that their promotion decisions would be subject to review by the alumni association. The no accountability condition consisted of participants who were informed that they were solely

responsible for their promotion decisions and that their recommendations would not be reviewed.

Two dependent variables were studied. The first was the number of Black candidates who were chosen by participants to fill three positions on a committee. The pool of eligible candidates consisted of seven individuals, five of whom were White and two were Black. Therefore, this variable ranged from 0 to 2.

The second dependent variable was the ratings of the Black employees' qualifications for the committee position. Participants rated each Black candidate according to how well that individual was qualified for the position. These ratings were assigned on a 10-point scale that ranged from 1 (does not meet qualifications) to 10 (superior qualifications). This variable consisted of the mean of the two Blacks' ratings.

Manipulation Checks

Candidate Qualifications. A pilot study was conducted in order to validate and differentiate between the strongly and weakly qualified candidate resumes. Four of the resumes intentionally contained strong qualifications, and the other three included weak credentials. Before using these resumes in the main study, the pilot group was used to confirm the strength of the qualifications. In order to isolate the qualifications as the single variable being evaluated, no information was included in the resumes that would identify the candidate's race.

A group of 11 White graduate psychology students from the University of Colorado at Denver voluntarily participated in the study. The principal researcher explained to these individuals that the University of Colorado Alumni Association was attempting to choose the three most qualified individuals from a pool of seven candidates to fill a 3-member student advocacy committee. This committee would work to resolve student-related issues on a full-time basis, and they would be paid a competitive salary for their employment. Because the committee would represent student interests, the association believed the students should have the opportunity to determine the best qualified individuals.

The participants' tasks included reading the requirements for the committee position and reviewing each of the resumes. They were then instructed to answer the following items for each of the seven resumes: (a) indicate which of the seven candidates are qualified for the position by circling "qualified" or "not qualified"; and (b) rate the candidates' qualifications on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (does not meet qualifications) to 10 (superior qualifications). The total time required to complete this process was approximately 20 minutes.

The results revealed that the participants labeled the four candidates with strong qualifications as qualified 84 percent of the time, while the three candidates with weak qualifications were identified as qualified only 12 percent of the time. The difference was significant, $t(10) = -7.06$, $p = .00$.

The strength of the candidates' qualifications was also rated. The mean rating for the qualified candidates was 6.82, and the mean value for the unqualified candidates was 3.61. The difference was significant, $t(10) = -5.35$, $p = .00$. The mean values for each of the four qualified candidates were as follows: 7.91, 7.0, 6.82, and 5.55. The mean ratings for the unqualified candidates were 3.91, 3.73, and 3.18.

Candidate Attractiveness. After rating the qualifications, the pilot study members were asked to rate the attractiveness of the individual photos to be used in the main study. In order to prevent gender from being a confounding variable, all seven candidates were males. Because the decision of determining the three most qualified candidates from a group of seven may be influenced by the attractiveness of the candidate's picture, participants were provided with the seven pictures and were directed to answer the following questions: (a) rate the attractiveness of each photo on a scale ranging from 1 (very unattractive) to 10 (very attractive); (b) indicate the most attractive individual; and (c) choose the least attractive individual.

The mean ratings for the Black photos were 7.45 (SD=0.93) and 5.64 (SD=1.36), while the average ratings of the two most attractive Whites were 5.82 (SD=0.98) and 5.09 (SD=1.14). Since candidate attractiveness could result in unqualified candidates unintentionally being chosen, the two most attractive Whites were randomly assigned to two of the qualified resumes, and the two Blacks were

matched with the other two qualified resumes. The remaining photos were each put with the three unqualified resumes. Therefore, the most attractive candidates possessed the strongest qualifications, and the least attractive were the least qualified for the job.

Main Study

The main study assessed the influence of subtle racist attitudes when making employment decisions. The study required approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participants of the study were told that the University of Colorado Alumni Association was in the process of forming a student advocacy committee that would work on such projects as eliminating student parking fees for CU-Denver students. The 3-person committee would consist of full-time paid positions that would be employed by the CU Alumni Association and work directly with the university's Board of Regents on student issues. This deception was used in order to encourage participants to provide honest feedback toward a topic that they believed directly affected them.

In order to incorporate the use of a social attitudes survey, I told the participants that I had volunteered to collect the student advocacy committee input for the alumni association in exchange for the opportunity to assess students' views toward a number of social issues during a period of national economic recession. In order to counterbalance the survey's potential effects on the employment decisions,

half of the participants completed the survey prior to making their selections or promotions, and the other half completed it subsequent to their selection or promotion recommendations.

Participants each received a packet of resumes, and each resume included a picture. They were informed that these seven people—two Blacks and five Whites— had been chosen from a larger pool as the final candidates for the committee positions. The participants were instructed to read the job requirements and review each individual's qualifications for the position. They were then asked to rate each candidate according to his qualifications for the position on a 10-point Likert scale and then indicate the three individuals who best satisfy the job requirements. Moreover, they were instructed to list which of the three they considered to be their top choice and provide a reason why that individual was the best qualified.

Employment Decision Condition. Since the study involves two types of employment decisions, the issue of effectively differentiating between the selection and promotion conditions needs to be addressed. After reviewing the literature, I found that the two types of studies differed primarily in the use of a scenario in which the participants were told to either hire the candidate or promote the candidate. Instead of providing a manipulation or factor to make the promotion condition different than a selection condition, the researchers simply instructed the participants to promote the best qualified person after watching a videotaped interview (Jackson,

1999; Barr & Hitt, 1986), observing actors in an interview setting (Gaillard, 1998), or responding to a paper-people methodology (Moore, 1998).

A study that compares responses from participants making selection decisions to those involving promotion decisions should distinguish more clearly between the two types of employment decisions, considering selection decisions are typically more closely examined for their legal defensibility than promotions. Moreover, selecting candidates must strictly comply with federal and state regulations pertaining to discrimination in hiring, whereas promotions are often subjectively determined by one individual. In the opinion of the author, one way to make this distinction is through the use of an equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy statement for participants faced with a selection decision and no such statement with the group making promotion decisions. This statement conforms to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by indicating, for example, that an employer does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The EEO statement would make participants in the selection group aware of the need to be fair in making hiring decisions.

Therefore, half of the participants in this study were informed after reviewing the job description and resumes that they would be making a hiring decision of the three best qualified candidates for the position. Their materials included the following statement: "The University of Colorado Alumni Association is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against applicants on the basis of

their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." Because employers are very aware of the laws prohibiting discrimination in hiring, a second statement was included in the selection group's materials. This statement was intended to make this issue salient to the participants, many of whom may not be familiar with the ramifications of failing to abide by anti-discrimination laws: "The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission performs a quarterly audit of the employment records in order to ensure full compliance with this anti-discrimination policy."

The remaining half of participants in the study were told that they would be recommending three of the individuals for promotion from their current positions within the CU Alumni Association. Because promotions do not face the same degree of scrutiny as selection decisions, the materials for participants in the promotion group did not include either of the aforementioned EEO statements.

Accountability Condition. Participants in the promotion group were examined to determine whether being held accountable for promotion decisions would lead to less discrimination toward Black employees. It has already been established that promotions are frequently based on subjective judgments and are often made by a single person. However, in some instances when a panel reviews these decisions, the outcome may be different than if there had been no review.

In order to assess the effect of accountability to others for promotion decisions, half of the promotion group was randomly placed in the accountability

condition, and the other half was put in the no accountability condition. Those in the accountability condition were instructed to act as if they were employed by the CU Alumni Association and would be held accountable for their promotion recommendations. In other words, they were told to make promotion recommendations knowing that they would have to justify their choices to a panel of CU Alumni Association employees. Participants in the no accountability condition were likewise told to make their decisions as if they were CU Alumni Association employees. However, they were informed that they would be solely responsible for their decisions and that they would not have to justify their choices or explain why they recommended certain candidates for promotion.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, coefficients alpha, and intercorrelations for the

predictor and outcome variables are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, Coefficients Alpha and Intercorrelations

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
Predictors							
1. Personal Locus of Control	2.66	.60	(.58)				
2. Subtle Racism (Modern Racism Scale)	2.22	.57	.18**	(.75)			
3. Employment Condition	1.69	.46	.06	.07	- -		
Outcomes							
4. Number of Blacks Chosen	1.57	.52	-.11	-.16*	.03	- -	
5. Ratings of Black Candidates' Qualifications	7.96	1.14	-.13*	-.11	-.07	.38**	- -

* p <.05; ** p < .01

Note: Predictor variables were measured on a 5-point scale except employment
condition (1=selection, 2=promotion). Number of Blacks chosen ranged from 0-2,
and Black candidates' qualifications were rated on a 10-point scale. N sizes ranged
from 236-249. Coefficient alphas are reported on the main diagonal.

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess differences between graduate and undergraduate respondents. Results revealed significant differences in the responses on the locus of control and subtle racism items. Therefore, to control for the effects of educational status (undergraduate versus graduate student), a partial correlation was conducted to test hypothesis one. This hypothesis stated that external locus of control will be positively correlated with subtle racist attitudes. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between personal locus of control and subtle racist attitudes, $r(246) = .16$, $p \leq .05$, after controlling for educational status. This finding confirmed the first hypothesis, since an external personal locus of control was found to be positively correlated with high subtle racist attitudes.

Partial correlations were also used to test the second and third hypotheses, controlling for the effects of the participant's educational status. The second hypothesis stated that subtle racist attitudes will be negatively correlated with Black employee promotion rates. The first analysis showed a significant negative relationship between Modern Racism Scale scores and the number of Black candidates chosen for promotion, $r(161) = -.20$, $p \leq .01$.

The third hypothesis stated that subtle racist attitudes will be negatively correlated with the ratings of the qualifications of Black candidates for promotion. The second analysis indicated a significant negative relationship between Modern Racism Scale scores and ratings of Black candidates' qualifications, $r(169) = -.18$, $p \leq .05$. The results are presented in Table 2. These analyses supported hypothesis

two and three as subtle racist attitudes were negatively correlated with both Black employee promotion rates and ratings of Black candidates' qualifications for promotion.

A hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the fourth hypothesis, which proposed that subtle racism will have a stronger negative relationship with promotion when participants are held accountable for their promotion decisions. In step one, the demographic variables—participant gender, age, and educational status—were entered as predictors, and the mean number of Black candidates chosen for promotion served as the dependent variable. The second and third steps included the mean Modern Racism Scale scores and accountability condition (coded as 0 = no accountability and 1 = accountability), respectively. The interaction term (the product of the modern racism and accountability variables) was entered in the fourth step. Hypothesis four was not supported, since subtle racism did not have a stronger negative relationship with promotion when participants were held accountable for their promotion decisions.

Table 2

Correlations Between Modern Racism Scale Scores and Dependent Variables
By Employment Condition After Controlling For Educational Status

Variable	Correlation with Modern Racism
Number of Blacks Selected	.004
Number of Blacks Promoted	-.20**
Ratings of Black Selection Candidates' Qualifications	.10
Ratings of Black Promotion Candidates' Qualifications	-.18*

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The fifth hypothesis involved a comparison of two partial correlations, controlling for the effects of participant educational status. The first partial correlation tested the relationship between the mean modern racism scores and the mean number of Black candidates selected, while the second determined the relationship between mean modern racism scores and the mean number of Black employees promoted. The results are presented in Table 2, which show a significant negative partial correlation between the mean Modern Racism Scale scores and the Black promotion rate but no significant relationship between the mean Modern Racism Scale scores and the Black selection rate.

However, because the fifth hypothesis proposed that subtle racist attitudes were more negatively associated with Black promotion rates than Black selection rates, a statistical comparison of the partial correlations was required. A hierarchical regression was conducted to test whether the partial correlations were significantly different across conditions. Residual variables were first created to control for the effects of participant educational status on Modern Racism Scale scores and the number of Blacks selected or promoted.

With the mean number of Blacks selected or promoted as the dependent variable, the regression analysis involved entering participant gender and age at step one and the employment condition (selection or promotion) and the residual modern racism variable at step two. The third step consisted of the interaction of the step two variables. The results did not reveal a significant difference in the partial correlations. Therefore, since subtle racist attitudes were not more negatively correlated with Black promotion rates than Black selection rates, hypothesis five was not supported.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study was divided into two areas of emphasis. The first examined

personal locus of control as a potential predictor of subtle racist attitudes, while the

second investigated whether subtle racist views influenced promotions of Black

employees. The first hypothesis predicted a positive relationship between external

locus of control and subtle racism. The results supported this prediction, which

suggests that the more individuals believe that outside influences control their lives,

the more they are likely to harbor negative views toward Blacks. One explanation for

this connection may be that when externals become dissatisfied with their

circumstances (e.g. job, life, financial situation, etc.), they see Blacks as one of the

outside sources responsible for their discontent. This linkage between an external

locus of control and prejudice toward Blacks confirms earlier work by Duckitt (1984)

involving similarly intolerant views by White South Africans toward Blacks. That

study assessed racial prejudice using a measure of ethnocentrism.

The basis of the second and third hypotheses involved the relationship

between subtle racist attitudes and promotion decisions. In order to determine the

effects of subtle racism, two dependent variables were used. The first was the

number of Blacks chosen for promotion, and the second dealt with the ratings of the

Black candidates' qualifications for promotion. This study sought to determine if individuals with subtle racist beliefs were less likely to promote Black employees or give lower ratings to Blacks who were being considered for promotion. The results supported both hypotheses, as subtle racism was strongly associated with the promotion of fewer Blacks and rating Black employees less qualified for a job.

Although research has suggested that subtle racists avoid situations in which they might appear to be prejudiced (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), one explanation for these findings may be due to the deception employed in the study. Participants were told that their input would be used to promote the three most qualified employees to form an advocacy committee that would work to resolve such issues as eliminating student parking fees on campus. Because students considered this a particularly important and relevant issue, it is more likely that they provided their most honest responses when answering survey questions and making promotion decisions.

The candidates' resumes were assembled so that three of the White candidates intentionally had clearly weak qualifications and the two remaining Whites and two Blacks had equally strong qualifications. A pilot study confirmed a significant difference between the strong and weak resumes, meaning that the most qualified candidates should have been evident to participants. However, participants may have assumed that all seven candidates for promotion were qualified for the job and viewed any distinctions between their qualifications as insignificant. Therefore, some degree of ambiguity resulted from having to choose three candidates from a pool of

seven qualified individuals. In other words, many participants may have not believed that there were obviously correct or clearly incorrect choices to be made.

Dovidio and Gaertner (2000) suggested that when confronted with an ambiguous situation, subtle racists will be more likely to discriminate against Blacks and yet still maintain their non-prejudiced self-image because their behaviors cannot easily be labeled as racist. Therefore, those who scored high on the measure of subtle racism did not consider promoting fewer Blacks or rating them lower than the White candidates as acts of racial prejudice.

The fourth hypothesis stated that subtle racism would have a stronger negative relationship with promotion when participants were held accountable for their promotion decisions. Specifically, it was predicted that high subtle racists would discriminate less against Black candidates for promotion when they were held accountable for their decisions. The results indicated that promotion recommendations were not affected by the accountability condition. This outcome may have been influenced by two factors. First, participants who were placed in the accountability condition were instructed to make promotion recommendations as if they would have to justify their decisions to a panel of individuals. Those in the no accountability condition were told to make their recommendations as if they were solely responsible for who was promoted and that they would not have to explain their rationale for their promotion decisions. This study may have failed to effectively

45

differentiate between the conditions and capture the effect on decision-making caused by the observation of another person.

The second issue that may have negated the potential effects of the accountability condition was the number of decision-makers involved in the study. When one individual is charged with making a decision affecting several people's careers, that person feels the pressures that accompany determining who is promoted and who is not. Furthermore, the decision-maker is well aware that they alone are responsible for the result. These issues, along with the concept that outcomes are altered when an individual's behaviors are scrutinized by another person (Powell & Butterfield, 1997), make the notion of accountability particularly compelling for the sole decision-maker. However, because each participant was a member of a large group of individuals who made promotion recommendations, these issues and any notion of accountability for their decisions did not likely play a meaningful role.

The fifth hypothesis predicted a greater negative relationship between subtle racist attitudes and Black promotion rates than between subtle racism and Black selection rates. Separate partial correlations that controlled for participant educational status showed a significant negative relationship between subtle racist attitudes and Black promotion rates. Similar to the results in another study (Brief et al., 2000), there was no significant association between subtle racism and Black selection rates. However, despite these findings the results did not support this

hypothesis, as the difference between the two partial correlations was not statistically

significant.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Implications

Several factors may have influenced the results of the study. Time constraints

prevented a second pilot study from being conducted, which would have determined

the salience of the selection and promotion conditions. Although subtle racism was

shown to be negatively correlated with Black promotion rates, such a study may have

offered additional support for this finding by showing that the two employment

conditions were significantly different from each other. Additionally, although using

"paper people" when conducting research is common, this format may have made

differentiating between tasks involving selection and promotion difficult for

participants. The use of videotaped actors may alleviate this problem in a future

study since participants could make promotion decisions, for example, based on

observing candidates dressed in a fictitional company's uniform, making the concept

of promotion more plausible.

The pilot study was conducted to eliminate the effects of candidate

attractiveness by matching the most attractive photos with the most qualified resumes.

However, despite the significant difference between the four attractive photos and the

three unattractive photos, too much variability existed among the attractive photos.

The most attractive photo was scored significantly higher on the rating scale than the

other three photos in the group. Any future studies using photographs should eliminate this confound by using photos of individuals that are not significantly different in terms of attractiveness.

While past research has examined the effects of making people responsible to others for their decisions, implementing accountability as an experimental condition within this study was difficult to accomplish. Within an organizational context, some employees make employment decisions autonomously while others are held accountable for their choices. Whereas the issue of accountability may greatly affect the outcomes in organizations, it was probably not as meaningful or influential among a sample that consisted of undergraduate and graduate students.

Only having a single period of data collection is another possible limitation of this study. Since participants completed the survey and made promotion recommendations concurrently, the issue of race may have been salient. Administering the survey and promotion decision task at separate times may be preferable to the method used in this study.

Although the Modern Racism Scale is a widely used measure of subtle racism, and the personal locus of control items are reported in the literature as a reliable and valid instrument, the coefficients alpha found in the current study were lower than desired. The low reliability coefficients for the personal locus of control items (.58) and the Modern Racism Scale (.75) are another potential limitation of the study.

In order to limit racial minority exposure to Modern Racism Scale items, two versions of the survey were available to participants. However, because participants were instructed to choose a "White" or "non-White" version, according to their self-identified racial category, some confusion in making that determination may have occurred. The principal researcher witnessed two Asian students completing the White version, which resulted in a sample that was not restricted to the responses of Caucasians. It is therefore recommended that future studies use one survey version and include multiple racial group categories on a cover sheet so that participants can identify their ethnicity in more specific terms.

Because the sample consisted of students attending an urban university with a large non-White population, some participants may have been more sensitive when answering survey items dealing with race. In fact, approximately 35% of the participants belonged to a non-White racial group. It is suggested that the demographic make-up of this study's participants influenced responses toward questions involving race. When dealing with measures of subtle racism, future endeavors should involve data collection from a variety of settings in order to compare participant responses from a racially diverse sample with a more racially homogeneous group.

Future directions for research include investigating the effects of subtle racism on promotion decisions in situations when the only qualified candidates are Black. This is contrary to the notion that subtle racists will discriminate only when

confronted with ambiguous circumstances—for example, when all candidates are equally qualified. However, because promotions do not face the same legal scrutiny as selection decisions, subtle racists are more likely to discriminate under a variety of conditions.

The association between locus of control and subtle racism needs to be explored further. Determining which aspects of locus of control—for example, political or personal—are linked to subtle racist beliefs may be worth researching.

This study contributes to the literature by empirically supporting the link between personal locus of control and subtle racist views. Knowing if an individual considers success on the job the result of external influences, for example, suggests an external locus of control. This study has shown that such an orientation is indicative of intolerant views of Blacks. This information may assist employers in assembling racially diverse workgroups as well as help them in pre-screening applicants for positions that require interracial contact.

The results of this study also have implications for private-sector companies and public-sector institutions by bringing to light discrimination against Blacks that can occur in the promotion process resulting from decisions made by those who hold subtle racist views. While laws prohibit racial discrimination and most firms are committed to a non-discriminatory hiring process, employee promotions are often decisions in which racial prejudice toward Blacks can occur. Knowing that subtle racism is strongly associated with lower promotion rates among Black employees,

firms can reduce or eliminate unfair treatment of Blacks workers by monitoring the

process and those who make decisions regarding employee advancement.

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL LOCUS OF CONTROL SURVEY ITEMS

Items from Ferguson's (1993) 10-Item Two-Factor Model
of Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

Personal Control Items

1. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life has taken.

2. Many times I feel as though I have little influence over what happens to me.

3. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

4. Getting a good job depends on being in the right place at the right time.

5. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good and bad fortune anyhow.

APPENDIX B

MODERN RACISM SCALE SURVEY ITEMS

Items from McConahay's (1986) Modern Racism Scale

1. Over the past few years, the government and news media have shown more respect to Blacks than they deserve.

2. It is easy to understand the anger of Black people in America.*

3. Discrimination against Blacks is no longer a problem in the United States.

4. Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.

5. Blacks are getting too demanding in their push for equal rights.

6. Blacks should not push themselves where they are not wanted.

* - Items that required reverse scoring.

APPENDIX C

FILLER ITEMS FOR THE SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY

Filler Items for the Social Attitudes Survey

1. Republicans are less likely than Democrats to show compassion toward the average citizen.

2. Most people are poor because they don't want to work.

3. The world is run by a few people in power, and there is not much the average person can do about it.

4. AIDS is a disease primarily contracted by homosexuals and drug addicts.

5. Earning a college degree is the only way to succeed in life.

6. People on welfare often want to provide for themselves but can't afford to get a job because it pays less than the assistance they receive.

7. I have one or more homosexual friends.

8. Politicians can do very little to prevent poverty.

9. Abortion involves a woman's right to choose.

10. I believe the federal government is too large, has too many social programs, and should be downsized.

11. People choose whether they lead a heterosexual or homosexual lifestyle.

12. Democrats are in favor of big government, and Republicans are in favor of tax breaks for the wealthy.

13. I prefer adoption to abortion, because abortion is morally wrong.

14. The most successful people in the world were only average students in school.

15. How a person behaves outside of work is nobody's business.

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